

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7408

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS MONTREAL 429

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, PINT, CA

SUBJ: QUEBEC LANGUAGE ACT (BILL 22)

1. IN WIDELY PUBLICIZED SPEECH TO CANADIAN CLUB OF MONTREAL ON APRIL 5, THE QUEBEC MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, GUY ST. PIERRE, MADE STRONG PITCH FOR MORE FRANCOPHONES IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN QUEBEC. ("FRANCOPHONE" IS GENERALLY DEFINED IN THIS CONTEXT AS "FRENCH QUEBECKER", NOT AS ONE OF WHATEVER BACKGROUND WHO SPEAKS FLUENT FRENCH.)

2. MANAGEMENT POSITIONS GOT SOME ATTENTION BUT BULK OF SPEECH DEVOTED TO NEED FOR MORE DIRECTORSHIPS IN FRANCOPHONE HANDS. MINISTER QUOTED STATISTICS SUCH AS FACT THAT OF TEN NATIONAL RETAILERS WITH HEAD OFFICES IN QUEBEC AND A TOTAL OF NINETY-FIVE DIRECTORSHIPS, ONLY SIX OF THE DIRECTORS WERE FRANCOPHONE AND SEVEN OF THOSE FIRMS HAD EITHER NONE OR JUST ONE FRANCOPHONE DIRECTOR. (GIVEN TOTAL OF SIX DIRECTORS, IT APPARENT MOST OF THOSE SEVEN COMPANIES HAD NONE.) ST. PIERRE LAID GROUNDWORK FOR THIS APPEAL WITH DISSERTATION ON NEED FOR BOARDS TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF SHAREHOLDERS, NOT ARM OF MANAGEMENT.

3. MINISTER ALSO REAFFIRMED QUEBEC'S "WELCOME (OF) FOREIGN INVESTMENT PROVIDED INVESTORS ACCEPTED OUR GOALS OF INTEGRATION."

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4. SPEECH WAS ENTITLED "WILL QUEBEC BE THE WATERLOO OF THE CANADIAN BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT?" (BRITISH CG, SEATED NEXT TO USCG, WONDERED ALOUD "WHY WATERLOO ALWAYS THOUGHT OF AS DEFEAT.") SPEECH TOPIC NOT ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TILL PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH: "ALTHOUGH I WOULD BE TEMPTED TO ANSWER NEGATIVELY ON YOUR BEHALF, I REALIZE THAT THE FULL ANSWER MUST COME FROM CANADIAN BUSINESSMEN THEMSELVES." HE CONCLUDED "THE TASK BEFORE US IS NOT AN EASY ONE. BUT IT MUST BE DONE. THERE IS NO WAY OUT OF THAT. TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT AND TOGETHER WE WILL".

5. SPEECH AND CLIPPINGS BEING POUCHED TO EUR/CAN.
HARPER

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